

The Expression of Sarcasm in the *Odyssey*

Elizabeth Minchin

Classics and Ancient History Program, The Australian National University, Canberra

ACT Australia 0200

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Abstract

I begin with a survey of relevant literature on sarcastic talk as it occurs in the anglophone world today. Having developed a 'view' of sarcasm in this contemporary world, I turn to expression of sarcasm in Homer. My examination of the spoken exchanges in the second half of the *Odyssey* reveals many features in common with sarcastic talk in the contemporary world and I demonstrate that the poet has used sarcastic talk to shape character, to establish mood, and, above all, to give structure to the scenes which bring together Odysseus and the suitors in the palace on Ithaka.

Keywords

sarcasm, rhetorical irony, *Odyssey*, characterization, story structure

1. *Sarcasm in the contemporary world*

This is a study of sarcasm--its expression and its reception--in Homer's *Odyssey*.¹⁾ I begin with a survey of relevant literature from linguistic philosophy, psychology, and linguistics on this discourse option as it occurs in the anglophone world today. Then, having developed a 'view' of sarcasm in this contemporary world, I turn to the expression of sarcasm in Homer. In examining the role sarcasm plays in relationships between characters in the *Odyssey* (who chooses to use sarcasm? to whom? how does it relate to status and power?), I focus on the ways in which the poet has used sarcastic talk to register the dynamics of the relationships between Odysseus--and his supporters--and the suitors in the palace on Ithaka.

The term 'sarcasm', Greek in origin, derives from a verb (σαρκάζω) which describes a physical act, the tearing of flesh.²⁾ A second, metaphorical, meaning refers to bitter or taunting speech: hence σαρκασμός, 'mockery' or 'sarcasm'.³⁾ A purely verbal discourse option, sarcasm is, as D. C. Muecke describes it, "the crudest form of irony".⁴⁾ A sarcastic remark in our world, with its negative connotations, most often takes the form of a positive, apparently well-intentioned, utterance.⁵⁾ Sarcasm may reside in the choice of speech act itself or in the content of the utterance.⁶⁾ So, for example, one may say to one's tennis partner who has been playing a poor game, 'That was a brilliant shot!' A compliment has been expressed, but precisely the opposite has been intended. Sarcasm is, therefore, a contravention of Grice's maxim of quality ('say what you believe to be true').⁷⁾

We might ask what the speaker actually intends by shaping his or her words in this way. The dominant theory of rhetorical irony (including sarcasm) proposes that this discourse option involves an act of *pretence*. That is, the speaker is pretending to be some other person or persona, who might say exactly what he or she is saying--or, indeed, s/he is pretending to hold the very opinions that he or she is stating.⁸⁾ The bT scholia to Homer's *Iliad* (on *Il.*22.373-374), speaking of sarcasm itself, capture this latter opposition effectively: σαρκασμός ὅταν ἐπαίνων λεγομένων ψόγον ἔχῃ, ὥς τὸ ἦ μάλ' ἐλαφρός ἀνὴρ (*Il.*745), '[I]t is sarcasm when words of praise convey blame, like the expression at 16.745, 'how nimble the fellow is!'.⁹⁾ In this passage in *Iliad* 16 Patroklos with false admiration appears to pay a tribute to a fallen hero, praising his agility, when in fact he has killed the man, whose subsequent acrobatic dive is in fact a lifeless tumble.¹⁰⁾ Patroklos does not mean what he says. This is a

speech of triumph. Likewise, the speaker on the tennis court pretends to express a compliment about his or her partner's game while his or her 'off record' views are negative.¹¹⁾ In each case the speaker assumes that his or her addressees understand that what has been implied is not the case--and that they recognize the inappropriateness of the speech act selected or the comment.¹²⁾ That is, sarcasm may be viewed as a form of verbal play, a game of 'opposites'.¹³⁾ Incongruence is at its heart. It is this incongruence that, as we shall observe below, can lead the addressee to identify the insincerity of the utterance.¹⁴⁾

Despite the apparent paradox of a discourse option that prompts speakers to select a speech act or to express a sentiment that conceals their off record intentions, Wilson and Sperber claim that hostile talk of this kind is universal;¹⁵⁾ it can arise spontaneously, and--perhaps a more contentious claim--does not have to be taught.¹⁶⁾ We might ask, too, who may use this discourse option. The use of sarcasm must depend on the context: on the speaker, the audience, the circumstances, and the subject-matter. We encounter sarcasm in our own world both in public discourse and in informal talk. Some individuals, however, cannot afford to be sarcastic: in some cases it is their rank, status or gender that holds them back.¹⁷⁾ In other cases it is the circumstances in which individuals find themselves (a difficult position, such as Odysseus' in the *Odyssey*-story, for example) that discourage them from employing sarcasm. Even the content of the ongoing talk is a factor, since the subject-matter may require absolute clarity--that is, there are circumstances in which there is no place for language-play or provocative utterances.

What are the signals of sarcasm for the addressee? First, there is, as we have seen above, a recognizable incongruity of utterance and context. Second, there will very often be a misfit between *what* the speaker is saying and *how* he or she says it. The addressee may observe intonational cues or non-verbal behaviour that alert him or her to discourse that is 'off record'. John Haiman discusses particular characteristics of the sarcastic register: he observes a formality of diction and syntax, and an exaggerated concern for etiquette.¹⁸⁾ As for the actual expression of the utterance, it may be announced with laughter or a sneer; and the speaker may select from a cluster of what are, in English at least, recognizable prosodic features--rhyme, alliteration, assonance, exaggerated stress and monotonous intonation (so-called 'heavy sarcasm'), inappropriate intonation, a sing-song melody, falsetto, or heavy pauses.¹⁹⁾ Raymond Gibbs confirms, however, that these special intonational cues are only one of a set of

heuristics that enable a listener to identify and understand a sarcastic comment.²⁰⁾ But, although they are not essential, they are used frequently. It is generally the case--although I discuss exceptions below--that the speaker does not wish his sarcasm to go unnoticed. Sarcasm is intended to be hurtful.

A promising starting point in the study of sarcasm has been the analysis of informal conversations in the English-speaking world between and amongst friends: Deborah Tannen observed irony, including sarcasm, in 7% of all turns in a prolonged conversation amongst friends that was part of a Thanksgiving dinner;²¹⁾ Raymond Gibbs, in his more recent study focussed entirely on irony, observed irony, including sarcasm, in 8% of turns in the conversations that he recorded between college students and their friends.²²⁾ The relatively low frequency of the use of sarcasm implies that being sarcastic is a risky business: a speaker using sarcasm can overstep the mark and spoil a friendship.²³⁾ On the other hand, because we tend not to use sarcasm often, we thereby ensure that this discourse option does not lose its force on those occasions when it is employed. This is confirmed by the fact that members of a conversational group will afterwards have clear memories of a sarcastic utterance, no matter who was the recipient.²⁴⁾

It has been thought, as I have implied above, that speakers expect that their addressees will recognize their sarcastic intent. Gibbs reports that only 4% of all sarcastic utterances were missed by his student sample. Patricia Rockwell's findings, on the other hand, have not borne this out. She has observed that speakers tend on the whole to produce more sarcasm than their partners typically perceive.²⁵⁾ In her discussion of this finding she notes that it may not always be the case that speakers intend their sarcasm to be recognized by their addressees. She suggests that some speakers may use a sarcastic remark to express their feelings about an exasperating situation--and they will find relief or satisfaction in having given vent to their unhappiness. But, she argues, they are not concerned that their addressee should hear or correctly interpret what they have said.²⁶⁾

It is clear that the function of the sarcastic remark cannot be simply to communicate information, for *the subject-matter* of the sarcastic utterance is almost always known to the addressee. So we must ask why speakers would go to the effort of expressing themselves in this complex fashion--through a reversal of what would have been the obvious statement. The point of sarcasm is that the speakers who use it are conveying *attitude*--whether frustration, unhappiness, disapproval, or, as we see in

the *Odyssey*, hostility.²⁷⁾ That is, when an individual has been irritated or angered by, or disappointed in, another person's actions or responses, he or she may opt to express this unhappiness with a 'flesh-tearing' edge to his or her words.²⁸⁾ A remark made sarcastically will almost always be *more* critical or *more* hostile than a literal statement.²⁹⁾ This is what distinguishes the 'flesh-eating', bitter expression of sarcasm from milder, ironic, comments, which may even be read amongst friends as humorous or teasing.³⁰⁾

2. *Sarcasm in Homer's Odyssey*

The *Odyssey* tells of the trials and sufferings of Odysseus as he struggles to make his homeward journey and of the testing of the young Telemachos as he makes his first excursion into the wider world. Since Telemachos for much of the period covered by the tale has neither the status nor the seniority to use sarcasm as a discourse option and since Odysseus in that same span of time is not in a sufficiently secure position to put at risk the relationships he is trying to build with those around him, there is little scope for sarcastic exchanges in the first half of the *Odyssey*. But after Odysseus' return to Ithaka, while he spends time in his palace in disguise as a beggar, we see *the sarcasm of others directed at the hero* and, finally, *retaliation* by the hero's supporters.³¹⁾ I begin my survey, however, with some comment on a remark that is not sarcastic but insulting. Euryalos' remarks (8.159-64) to Odysseus amongst the Phaiakians hint at the hostility and mockery to come, when Odysseus is reduced even further, to beggar status in his palace on Ithaka.

3. *On Scheria: Euryalos*

Laodamas, Alkinoös' son, has invited Odysseus (at 8.145-51) to join in the games that the Phaiakians have decided to celebrate. Odysseus has declined the invitation, saying that he is too burdened with care and too concerned about his return to his homeland to participate in such contests (153-7).³²⁾ At 159-64, Euryalos, one of the young Phaiakians, addressing Odysseus, responds sharply to the hero's refusal to join the sport (νείκεσέ, he taunted him, 158). Here is what he says:

οὐ γάρ σ' οὐδέ, ξεῖνε, δαήμονι φωτὶ ἐῖσχω
ἄθλων, οἷά τε πολλὰ μετ' ἀνθρώποισι πέλονται,

ἀλλὰ τῷ ὅς θ' ἅμα νηϊ πολυκλητῇδι θαμίζων
 ἀρχὸς ναυτῶν οἳ τε πρηκτῆρες ἔασι,
 φόρτου τε μνήμων καὶ ἐπίσκοπος ἦσιν ὁδαίων
 κερδέων θ' ἄρπαλέων· οὐδ' ἀθλητῇρι ἔοικας.

'No, stranger, for I do not see that you are like one versed
 in contests, such as now are practiced much among people,
 but rather to one who plies his ways in his many-locked vessel,
 master over mariners who also are men of business,
 a man who, careful of his cargo and grasping for profits,
 goes carefully on his way. You do not resemble an athlete.'

Through his emphatic double negative (159) Euryalos appears at first to be in sympathy with Odysseus' reluctance to compete, but he moves on quickly, to liken Odysseus to a merchant seaman, the kind of man who profits from trade--and who is held in contempt by the aristocrat: Euryalos, that is, insults the stranger-guest in the presence of the company in the hall. This is the kind of agonistic speech that Richard Martin terms 'flyting'.³³⁾ Flyting is often specifically associated with verbs such as *νεικέω*, *ἐνίπτω*, or *κερτομέω*; but, as we shall see from further instances in the *Odyssey*, sometimes content alone, or the reaction of the addressee, makes it clear that we are observing an utterance that is designed to provoke. What is clear, however, is that Euryalos has not chosen an equal contestant for such a game; he has selected a man who has recently arrived in the palace having survived shipwreck and the violence of the sea, and who is a guest amongst the nobles. He has chosen an inappropriate target for his cutting words.

Odysseus shares Euryalos' aristocratic values.³⁴⁾ He recognizes Euryalos' insult. He becomes angry, as his facial expression indicates and as he himself later declares, 178-9. Scowling at Euryalos (ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν, 165), he comments, at 166, first on what was said (οὐ καλὸν ἔειπες, you did not speak well) and then on the speaker (ἄτασθαλόω ἀνδρὶ ἔοικας, you seem like a reckless man).³⁵⁾ He makes the point that he is angry (178): Euryalos' speech has been θυμοδακής: it is 'heart-biting' (185). He then leaps to his feet and displays his superior skills with the discus, 186-98. Afterwards, his host, Alkinoös, chastises Euryalos for his behaviour (236-40). He very properly requires Euryalos, at 396-7, to make amends (ἀρεσσάσθω) to

Odysseus, both with words (ἐπέεσσιν) and a gift (δῶρον). Euryalos duly offers a gift and makes an elegant and respectful apology (408-10). Here are his introductory words, at 409-410:

Χαῖρε, πάτερ ὦ ξεῖνε· ἔπος δ' εἴ πέρ τι βέβακται
δεινόν, ἄφαρ τὸ φέροιεν ἀναρπάξασαι ἄελλαι.

^Farewell, father and stranger, and if any word was let slip
that was improper, may the stormwinds catch it away and carry it
off.'

The episode, which ends with Odysseus' acceptance of Euryalos' apology (413-5), has established a paradigm against which we are intended to read what will happen when Odysseus reaches the palace on Ithaka. There the hero, disguised as a beggar, will be insulted and abused by the more reckless of Penelope's suitors, Antinoös, Eurymachos and Ktesippos, and he will see his loyal servant Eumaios, treated likewise. The gracious resolution of this earlier incident on Scheria makes a point about politeness and respect in palace society and will contrast vividly with the state of affairs in the palace on Ithaka, where the insolence of the suitors goes unchecked.

4. In the palace on Ithaka: Antinoös, Eumaios, and Telemachos

The scene now shifts to the palace on Ithaka. Eumaios has brought Odysseus to the palace and they have entered the hall (17.336). Odysseus at this point resembles a dismal old vagabond, 337. As Odysseus moves amongst the suitors, begging for food, Antinoös addresses Eumaios and mocks him (νείκεσσε, 374). The exaggerated politeness with which he, an aristocrat, addresses the swineherd (ὦ ἀρίγγωτε συβῶτα, 'distinguished swineherd', 375) alerts us to a surface mismatch that suggests the arrogance and hostility of sarcasm. Pretending to consult Eumaios (through three rhetorical questions), Antinoös rebukes him for bringing yet another noxious beggar amongst the feasters. Deliberately misinterpreting Telemachos' hospitality to the beggar, as he indicates in his question ὄνοσαι ὅτι τοι βίοτον κατέδουσιν ἄνακτος | ἐνθάδ' ἀγειρόμενοι ('are you not content with the fact that men gather here and devour your master's substance . . .?' 378-9), he asks whether Eumaios has

brought yet another person to join them. Antinoös' heavy sarcasm is underpinned by further irony, *dramatic* irony, at Antinoös' expense: the suitor appears to be treating Odysseus' property as his own--even as he is one of those who are devouring Odysseus' livelihood.³⁶⁾

Eumaios reacts as Odysseus did at 8.165: he comments negatively on what was said and on the speaker (οὐ μὲν καλὰ καὶ ἐσθλὸς ἐὼν ἀγορεύεις, 'though you are noble, this was not well spoken', 381). He defends Telemachos, and the presence of the beggar, by turning on Antinoös (388-91). But his attack can only be mild, for he is of lesser status than Antinoös. Telemachos now intervenes. Giving a mini-lecture on the impact of sarcasm and how to deal with it, he tells Eumaios that Antinoös does not deserve a long reply (393);³⁷⁾ and he comments on what Antinoös has said: the suitor aims to irritate us (ἐρεθίζεμεν, 394) with his hurtful words (μύθοισιν χάλεποῖσιν, 395), and to stir us up. And now Telemachos addresses Antinoös;³⁸⁾ his initial words appear to be polite. This we might expect: Antinoös is his senior (397-9):

Ἀντίνο', ἧ μευ καλὰ πατήρ ὥς κήδεαι υἱός,
ὅς τὸν ξεῖνον ἄνωγας ἀπὸ μεγάροιο δῖεσθαι
μύθῳ ἀναγκαίῳ·

'Antinoös, as a father for his son you take good care
of me, when you tell our stranger guest to get out of the palace,
with a strict word.'

But this politeness is superficial. Telemachos' intention is hostile. His words are sarcastic--surprisingly so, given the diffidence with which he had spoken in earlier episodes on Ithaka. Telemachos' mock-deferential gratitude to Antinoös for his fatherly protection is not lost on Odysseus, who, although he is not part of this conversation, can nevertheless hear what is being said.³⁹⁾ Telemachos continues in this hostile vein. Telling Antinoös to be generous to the beggar (with what he himself has taken from the household!), and to take no notice of Penelope or any of the servants who might curb his generosity (400-2), he says in emphatic staccato δός οἱ ἐλών· οὐ τοι φθονέω· κέλομαι γὰρ ἐγὼ γε ('Take and give. I do not begrudge you. I even urge you', 400). At 403-4 the young man drops his sarcastic tone and

accuses Antinoös openly of greed rather than generosity. The combination of Telemachos' sarcasm and his accusation infuriates Antinoös, who, at 406, accuses him in turn of arrogance--he addresses him as ὑψαγόρη (406)--and intemperance (μένος ἄσχετε, 406), and, at 409-10, threatens violence.

Here we can observe the workings of sarcasm in the *Odyssey*. The sarcastic remark is intended as a taunt. It intensifies the force of the utterance and, as we noted above, conveys *attitude* rather than *information*. In the Antinoös-scene, sarcasm's capacity to wound is registered when Telemachos steps in to attack Antinoös on Eumaios' (and the beggar's) behalf. Its aggressive force becomes clear when verbal jousting gives way to a threat of actual violence. And yet, amidst all this heightened emotion, positive feelings may also be communicated. When Telemachos refers sarcastically, in Odysseus' hearing, to the care that Antinoös feels for him as father for son, the sarcasm operates in not one but two ways. The bitterness of his comment is directed at Antinoös. But the sarcasm works also as an affiliative strategy between Telemachos and his actual father. He alone knows the beggar's identity; this moment of complicity strengthens the bond between them.

5. Eurymachos and the beggar

There are two suitors who stand out as leaders of the pack. One of these is Antinoös; the other is Eurymachos.⁴⁰⁾ They are of a kind, although, as Fenik observes, Antinoös is irascible and heedless and Eurymachos, by contrast, more of a dissembler.⁴¹⁾ At 18.350 Eurymachos begins taunting (κερτομέων) Odysseus.⁴²⁾ The poet's choice of a verb that we associate with flyting, κερτομέω, suggests that a provocative or offensive meaning 'off record' is intended.⁴³⁾ Note Eurymachos' laugh (350): a signal to the suitors, the in-group, that he is about to entertain them at Odysseus' expense. He jokes about Odysseus' baldness (351-5);⁴⁴⁾ then he addresses the stranger-beggar himself. Giving the appearance of amiability and respect--neither of which is genuine--he asks him whether he would like some paid work on his estate (357-61). Notice how he introduces his proposal: ζεῖν', ἦ ἄρ κ' ἐθέλοις θητευέμεν, εἴ σ' ἀνελοίμην, '... stranger, if I were to take you up, would you be willing ...' (357). But he goes on (362-4):

ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ οὖν δὴ ἔργα κάκ' ἔμμαθες, οὐκ ἐθέλῃσεις

ἔργον ἐποίχασθαι, ἀλλὰ πτώσσειν κατὰ δῆμον
βούλει, . . .

'But since all the work you have learned is bad, you will not be willing
to go off and work hard; no, you would rather beg where the people
are, . . .'

Eurymachos claims to be consulting Odysseus; but makes it clear that his very offer is a pretence by responding to it himself, in the negative. In his view, the beggar simply prefers to live off the generosity of others. It is a cheap insult to a man whom he assumes to be his social inferior.

In the beggar's tart response (366-86) we observe the poet attempting to recreate in his song the 'spontaneity' of his indignation. As de Jong observes, Odysseus' ἔργοιο of 366 picks up Eurymachos' ἔργον of 363.⁴⁵⁾ The beggar promptly and unexpectedly challenges Eurymachos to a competition, a series of rustic challenges.⁴⁶⁾ As he speaks, this beggar becomes more Odysseus-like and, goaded by Eurymachos' insult, his rustic challenge becomes an aristocratic challenge (for a contest in armour, 376-80). Finally, he makes the point that has been made in the passages we examined above, that when the addressee is of lower status than the speaker, the kind of flyting talk Eurymachos had engaged in is uncomfortable, even hurtful, and therefore inappropriate, because he cannot respond in kind. At 381 Odysseus says, ἀλλὰ μάλ' ὑβρίζεις καὶ τοι νόος ἐστὶν ἀπηγής ('but now you are very insulting and think to be hostile to me'). And he comments that Eurymachos is mixing with the wrong people; this explains his aggressiveness in present company (382-3). But, the beggar goes on, should a real hero, Odysseus himself, return to the palace, the doors, even though they are wide (καὶ εὐρέα περ μάλ' ἐόντα) would not be wide enough to allow Eurymachos' speedy flight (385). This last insult, in which the beggar brings before our mind's eye the suitor's cowardly dash for safety even as he plays with his name, Eurymachos, stirs the suitor's anger.⁴⁷⁾ He is angry about the accusation itself; he is angry because it has been made publicly, for all in the hall to hear; and he is angry because a beggar, his subordinate, has spoken out of turn. It is not for a person of lower status to utter such hostile words to a person of higher status.⁴⁸⁾ Note, however, that Odysseus does not yet retaliate with sarcasm: his current position in the palace on Ithaka does not allow it.

Eurymachos scowls (388) and threatens to harm the beggar for the bold way (θαρσαλέως, 390) he has spoken. Again we see how mere words can lead to violence--especially in this volatile context. Unlike Antinoös, who had merely threatened to throw a stool, Eurymachos actually seizes a footstool and does so. He misses his target (394-8). The suitor is acting in response to his reckless instincts, attempting to harm a stranger in the palace in which he himself is a 'guest'.

6. *Ktesippos, the beggar, and Telemachos*

At 20.287 we meet for the first time another suitor, Ktesippos. In his address to the suitors at 292-8 he pretends, piously, to be endorsing the norms of hospitality: the beggar has quite rightly (ὥς ἐπέοικεν, 'as is fitting', 293) enjoyed an equal share of Telemachos' hospitality, for he is a guest in the palace, he says. At this point we observe the insincerity of Ktesippos' words. His sarcasm is restrained at first, as he pretends to have sentiments that he does not endorse. Then, at 296, he is openly mocking, as he announces, in an echo of Polyphemos' words, that he will offer the beggar a guest-gift (ξείνιον, 296), in fact an ox-hoof; and he promptly throws the hoof at Odysseus' head (299-300).⁴⁹⁾ This is an unprovoked attack; the suitor, like Eurymachos, is acting in a manner contrary to the laws of hospitality that he had a moment before pretended to endorse. As Homer tells us, he is ἀθεμίστια εἰδώς ('versed in villainy', 287).

Ktesippos misses his target. Odysseus merely smiles at this--a sardonic smile (301-2). He is angry; he is bitter; but he bides his time. In the light of his outburst earlier (18.384-6), which could have resulted in his abandoning his disguise before the appropriate moment, silence now is his safest strategy. And it is Telemachos who responds to Ktesippos' violence (both verbal and physical) with angry, and forceful, words.⁵⁰⁾ He now asks for a halt to the rudeness that is being displayed in the house (μή τίς μοι ἀεικείας ἐνὶ οἴκῳ φαινέτω, 308-9). His request for restraint is impassioned; he mentions that he knows that the suitors have been plotting his death. He continues to grow in confidence, as we have observed above. But, although Telemachos has protested and asked for a halt to violence, he has not in this scene retaliated with cutting words. Thus there is, as yet, no real rejoinder from the beggar or his supporters to Ktesippos' sarcasm. But, as we know from everyday life, sarcastic

remarks linger in the mind; they demand a response. At 22.285-91, a passage which I consider below, the poet will tie off what for now must remain a loose end.

7. *Prior to the contest of the bow: the suitors' delirium*

The suitors and Theoklymenos. At 20.376-83, Theoklymenos, who now speaks for the first time in the palace hall, has prophesied a horrifying death for all the suitors (351-7)⁵¹⁾ and they in response have laughed merrily (ἡδὺ γέλασσαν, 358)--for a 'spell' has been cast over them by Athene (345-6).⁵²⁾ In their delusion they turn Theoklymenos into a joke. After he has left them to go to the house of his host, the jokes continue. And the suitors, still laughing, try to tease (ἐρεθίζον, 374) Telemachos: Τηλέμαχ', οὐ τις σεῖο κακοξενώτερος ἄλλος, 'no one has worse luck with his guests than you, Telemachos' (376). They find amusement in one guest, the beggar, who is eager to fill his belly; and in the other, Theoklymenos, who is given to prophecy. They propose, pretending kind-hearted concern for Telemachos' household income, that the guests be shipped off to the Sicilians and put up for sale (381-3). We know that the minds of the suitors have been unhinged by Athene. Thus, although there is now no truly 'flesh-eating' edge to their sarcasm, their words are intentionally unkind--the sort of mockery that arouses jeers and laughter at another's expense (345-9). And although they try to make Telemachos rise to their bait, they are unsuccessful. He too remains sternly silent (ὁ δ' οὐκ ἐμπάζετο μύθων, 384), in accord with his father, waiting for the moment when they can take their revenge.

This small scene points up sarcasm's propensity for word-play, in the poet's creation of the delightful κακοξενώτερος ('having a rather bad run with guests', 376). And it shows again how sarcasm can function as a strategy to build or confirm the solidarity of an 'in-group': there is a recognizable *esprit de corps* amongst the suitors as they share their amusement with each other (πάντες ἐς ἀλλήλους ὀρόωντες, 'glancing at one another', 373) while they tease their host.⁵³⁾

The suitors and Eumaios. In the course of the events that lead up to the contest of the bow, we observe sparks of sarcasm from participants on both sides. Antinoös speaks with an insulting edge to fellow-suitor Leodes (21.168-74);⁵⁴⁾ and the suitors address Eumaios with mocking disbelief at 362.⁵⁵⁾ These flashes of hostility are an indication of the tension amongst the suitors at this point of the action.⁵⁶⁾

The suitors and Odysseus. Finally, Odysseus is allowed to take the bow (21.378-9). At first he simply examines it (393-5). At this point one of the suitors speaks, with misplaced sarcasm: ἦ τις θηητήρ, 'this man is surely a connoisseur' (397); and he develops an image of the beggar as a collector, or possibly a specialist craftsman (398-9). He rounds off his fantasy with an insult: the beggar is κακῶν ἔμπαιος ἀλήτης, 'thoroughly conversant in . . . villainy' (400).⁵⁷⁾ Another takes up the game of pretence (402-3): he wishes, he says sarcastically, that the beggar's good fortune would be equalled by his success with the bow.⁵⁸⁾ The double τις speech marks the moment of greatest delusion amongst the suitors: this is the moment that Odysseus and his supporters (and the audience) have been waiting for. The hero strings the bow ἄτερ σπουδῆς ('without effort', 409). And he sends the arrow through the axes (420-3). And now he speaks. He addresses Telemachos, although his remarks are intended also for the ears of the suitors, with a series of claims expressed through negatives, beginning with the ironic understatement οὐ σ' ὁ ξείνος ἐλέγχει, 'your guest does not disgrace you', 424, and noting the scornful comments of the suitors (427).⁵⁹⁾ And then he makes a more general announcement: it is time for an evening meal, in the daytime (428-9); and it is time to amuse ourselves with dance and the lyre (429-30).⁶⁰⁾ We detect in Odysseus' words a grim foreshadowing of what is to come. But these words are not, of course, sarcastic, as Odysseus does not intend them to be wounding.

8. After the stringing of the bow: Odysseus, Eumaios, Philoitios

Odysseus to Antinoös. With a memorable *coup de théâtre*⁶¹⁾ the beggar takes command of the gathering (22.1-4). The suitors are quickly stripped of their power in the palace; and Odysseus, his son, and their loyal retainers move to assume once more their proper status. At 22.5 Odysseus allows himself--at last--a sarcastic taunt as he claims victory in the contest of the bow. The sarcasm lies in his echoing of, and, in a sense, 'response' to, a phrase that Antinoös had uttered at 21.91, when he described the great bow as μνηστήρεσσιν ἄεθλον ἄατον ('a decisive prize for the suitors [to strive for]').⁶²⁾ The potential for irony in these words at 21.91 was not overlooked by Odysseus. He uses the same phrase at 22.5: οὗτος μὲν δὴ ἄεθλος ἄατος ἐκτετέλεσται ('here is a task that has been achieved, a decisive one'). His words resound with a grim mockery. His declaration is addressed to the gathering, but is intended for the leader of the suitors, Antinoös, to whom he also directs his next

arrow (6-7). Once the suitors realize that Antinoös has been killed, they protest, in an amusing echo of the earlier protests of those who had been the victims of their hurtful sarcasm (for example, at 17.381): *κακῶς ἀνδρῶν τοξάζεαι*, 'it is badly done to hit men', 27. At this point, however, they do not realize that it is Odysseus himself who is before them, and that the death that they have witnessed will not be the last.

Eumaios to Melanthios. It is Eumaios the swineherd who indulges his bitterness against Melanthios at that (for Eumaios) satisfying moment when Melanthios is captured and hung by a rope from the roof beams (22.192-3). This moment brings an answer to one of the swineherd's prayers (17.240-6). Earlier, when Odysseus and Eumaios had been on their way to the palace, they had encountered Melanthios. The goatherd had spitefully tried to kick at Odysseus (17.233-4). Now at 22.195-9 Eumaios addresses him, jeering (*ἐπικερτομέων*, 194):

νῦν μὲν δὴ μάλα πάγχυ, Μελάνθιε, νύκτα φυλάξεις,
 εὐνῇ ἔνι μαλακῇ καταλέγμενος, ὥς σε ἔοικεν·
 οὐδὲ σέ γ' ἡριγένεια παρ' Ὠκεανοῖο ῥόαων
 λήσει ἐπερχομένη χρυσόθρονος, ἥνικ' ἀγινεῖς
 αἶγας μνηστήρεσσι δόμον κάτα δαῖτα πένηςθαι.

'Now the whole night long, Melanthios, you shall keep watch
 wakefully, laid, as you deserve, to rest on a soft bed,
 well aware of the young Dawn throned in gold as she rises
 up from the Ocean rivers, at the time when you used to drive in
 goats to the palace, so as to make a feast for the suitors.'

Eumaios pretends to feel the concern of a well-intentioned host for the goatherd's comfort as he 'keeps watch' (195). There is heavy irony in his antithetical reference to the soft bed (*εὐνῇ . . . μαλακῇ*, 196), and in his implication that this soft bed is precisely what Melanthios deserves. Melanthios in his everyday life was obliged to keep himself awake at night in order to keep watch over his flock. Now he is tightly bound, and his present accommodation, suspended from a roof beam, is anything but a soft bed. Melanthios will not have to fight sleep on this night. I noted above that lofty diction is marker of sarcasm. We see such an instance at 197-8, as Eumaios speaks of 'golden-throned dawn'.⁶³⁾

Philoitios to Ktesippos. Finally, there is a tidiness about the death of Ktesippos at Philoitios' hands (22.285-6). It was Ktesippos who had hurled an ox-hoof at Odysseus as a guest gift (20.299-300). Now it is the ox-herd who takes revenge on his master's behalf. Having struck Ktesippos in the chest he addresses him triumphantly, his action being described as ἐπευχόμενος, 286, a term that we associate with the boast that accompanies the slaying of an opponent in the battle scenes of the *Iliad* (cf. *Il.* 16.745-50).⁶⁴ And he uses, sarcastically, a high-flown address-form which incorporates its own mocking epithet: ὦ Πολυθερσεΐδῃ φιλοκέρτομε, 'O son of Polythereses, lover of mockery' (287). As he offers the dying Ktesippos his 'gift' of death, Philoitios exclaims τοῦτό τοι ἀντὶ ποδὸς ξεινήϊον, 'here is your guest gift, in exchange for that hoof . . .', 22.290 (cf. 20.296). Philoitios' repetition of ξείνιον demonstrates that it is not only physical violence that stays in one's memory but the verbal violence of sarcasm as well. Indeed, it is worth noting that with each usage, from 9.369-70 and 517-8, through 20.296 to 22.290, the term becomes more heavily weighted.

Odysseus to Leodes. Odysseus, Eumaios, and Philoitios have had the satisfaction of responding, sarcasm for sarcasm, to those who insulted them. But Odysseus has one final exchange, this time with Leodes, the suitor with prophetic powers. When Leodes at 312-9 supplicates Odysseus, arguing that, because the suitors would not listen to his warnings, *so* (τῷ, 317) they met a shameful end, Odysseus, ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν, 'looking darkly', 320, mimics the structure of his proposition, with significant revisions. His expression is menacing, as at 8.165: for, in Holoka's terms, an 'infraction of propriety has occurred'.⁶⁵ At last the hero, in his own palace, can allow his face to express his feelings: disguise is no longer an imperative. Odysseus retorts (321-5), saying that if Leodes had been the diviner for the suitors he must have prayed to the gods that Odysseus would never return. *So* (τῷ, 325), he says, οὐκ ἔν θάνατόν γε δυσληγέα προφύγοισθα, 'you cannot escape from sorry destruction'. This neat revision of Leodes' plea is grimly sarcastic. Odysseus pretends to endorse Leodes' argument by adopting its format, but he reaches the opposite--pitiless--conclusion.

9. *Sarcasm in the Odyssey: some conclusions*

How does the poet shape an utterance so that it will be recognizable as sarcasm to his audience? Because a sarcastic utterance could in many cases be mistaken by his listeners for a 'straight' utterance, the poet may accompany it with a verbal cue or some contextual detail. He may use introductory verbs--νεικέω, ἐρεθίζω, and κερτομέω;⁶⁶ he may report expressive body language (such as ὑπόδρα ἴδων); or he may describe the reaction of the addressee: an angry response, silent resentment, or a reproach and a demand for an apology. As for the utterance itself, the poet attempts to catch some of the spontaneity of conversational exchange--the quick repartee of the sarcastic taunt and its rejoinder, address-terms of abuse, exaggerated politeness and inappropriately lofty diction, and inventive word-play--even as he works within the constraints of his tradition. To this end he also uses prosodic cues--alliteration and assonance--or those particles that express nuances of thought or emotion. Other cues may be invisible and inaudible to us today, but a singing poet may well have rendered them dramatically in performance.

In the world that he creates in the *Odyssey* sarcasm, with its taunts and jibes, is a behaviour that we associate with men rather than women. It is a competitive, aggressive behaviour, through which the poet shows us the suitors jostling for status in the chaotic household of a palace without its lord. Sarcasm responds to--and reinforces--status and rank: it is acceptable for a superior or elder to be sarcastic to a subordinate or junior; equals may trade sarcasm; a subordinate or a junior should not be sarcastic to a superior or elder. In Homer these rules are occasionally broken; and Homer always is careful to observe what happens next: those who speak out of turn will always be reproved.

As modern research indicates, the function of sarcasm is to convey the attitude of the speaker to an event, an action, or a person. In these instances in the *Odyssey* the suitors' sarcasm conveys their arrogant attitude to the beggar and to the servants of Odysseus--and this, inevitably, reflects on (even as it creates) their own characters. It is the *attitude* of the suitors that so offends Odysseus. It will be their arrogance that he will punish.

A critical remark may be intensified by the bitter twist of sarcasm. At no point in the *Odyssey* is a sarcastic remark left hanging. The addressee, or even engaged observers of sarcasm, will respond to what has been said and will comment on the inappropriateness of this speech form. Sarcasm, when used by people of higher status

against people of lower status, is regarded, in Homer's world, as inappropriate. But when sarcasm is used *in retaliation* by Odysseus, Eumaios, and Philoitios, we view it as justified: an insult has been avenged. Finally, sarcasm is memorable. The addressee within the tale will remember the taunt and, in this story in which retribution plays such a dramatic role, will repay it.

Although Homer forewarns us of the potential for hostility and insult in the jibes of young men in the ordered world on Scheria, only in the palace on Ithaka do we hear sarcasm being used, first, by the suitors to the beggar and, later, by Odysseus and his supporters in retaliation. That is, the poet of the *Odyssey* has restricted his use of sarcasm to a narrow set of players and to a limited band of time. He clearly intends this discourse option to define critical relationships in his tale and to set the tone for the encounter between Odysseus and the suitors. So the suitors address sarcastic remarks to the beggar and direct further remarks about Odysseus to the hero's supporters (and to each other). The hero and his supporters keep track of the insults they receive and, when the time is right, repay the hurt. Although Telemachos attempts to defend his father at 17.397-404, exchanging sarcasm for sarcasm, Antinoös is not deterred; and Odysseus' supporters thereafter hold their peace. It is only after the stringing of the bow and Odysseus' resurgence that all outstanding debts are called in: Odysseus taunts Antinoös, the leader of the suitors; Ktesippos is punished by Philoitios; and Eumaios mocks Melanthios. Odysseus, too, has one final satisfying encounter with Leodes, the last of the suitors, whom he taunts and, in a moment of controlled violence, kills. The expression of sarcasm, therefore, not only functions as a powerful indicator (and creator) of character in the *Odyssey*. It also establishes the mood that pervades the scenes in the palace on Ithaka--its competitive tension and its pervasive aggression; and, as I have demonstrated, it operates as an important structural component of this last long section of the tale.

Table 1: Sarcasm in the second half of the *Odyssey*

<i>Location</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Addressee</i>	<i>Introductory expression</i>
17. 375-379	Antinoös	Eumaios	ἔπεσιν νείκεσσε
17.397-404	Telemachos	Antinoös	ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα
18. 351-361	Eurymachos	Odysseus	ἄρχ' ἀγορεύειν κερτομέων
20. 292-296	Ktesippos	Odysseus	μετηύδα
20. 376-383	a suitor	Telemachos	πάντες ἐς ἀλλήλους ὀρόωντες ἐρέθιζον τις εἶπεσκε
21.168-174	Antinoös	Leodes	ἐνέπιπεν
21.362-365	a suitor	Eumaios	τις εἶπεσκε
21.397-400	a suitor	to other suitors	τις εἶπεσκεν ἰδὼν ἐς πλησίον ἄλλον
21.402-403	a suitor	to other suitors	ἄλλος δ' αὖ εἶπεσκε
21.428-430	Odysseus	Telemachos	Τηλέμαχον προσέειπε
22.5	Odysseus	suitors	μετὰ μνηστήρσιν ἔειπεν
22. 195-199	Eumaios	Melanthios	ἐπικερτομέων προσέφη
22. 287-291	Philoitios	Ktesippos	ἐπευχόμενος . . . προσηύδα
22.321-325	Odysseus	Leodes	ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη

¹ I have benefited from discussions with a number of colleagues in my efforts to define precisely what is sarcastic and what is not. In particular I thank the audience at the annual conference of the Australasian Society for Classical Studies at Sydney University in January 2009 for their insights, and the referee for *Mnemosyne*, who made a number of helpful suggestions.

² σαρκάζω, tear flesh (LSJ): cf. Ar., *Pax* 482 (σαρκάζοντες ὥσπερ κυνίδια, 'tearing flesh like puppies').

³ 'Sarcasm' in turn is defined as a sharp, bitter, or cutting expression or taunt (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*).

⁴ Muecke (1969, 54). When Muecke uses the term 'irony' he is speaking of rhetorical irony. For discussion of the different manifestations of irony and, in particular, working definitions of rhetorical irony and dramatic irony (especially as these phenomena are observable in Homer's *Iliad*), see Nünlist (2000). Note that although irony in its broadest sense may be either verbal or situational, sarcasm, a sub-category of rhetorical irony, must always be verbal, or, more precisely, rhetorical.

⁵ Gibbs (2000, 18) notes that 69% of the sarcastic utterances that he recorded were *positive* utterances intending to convey a *negative* message. Gibbs considered that negative utterances conveying a positive message also counted as sarcasm. I do not accept this. Sarcasm must be hurtful. Remarks such as the remark Diomedes makes to Nestor (*Il.*10.164-7), which I discuss briefly below, are not, in my view, sarcastic.

⁶ Nünlist (2000, 73-4) following Lapp (1997, 97).

⁷ Grice (1975, 53).

⁸ Following Grice (1978, 124-5): 'to be ironical is, amongst other things, to pretend'; see also, e.g., Clark and Gerrig (1984). The Greek verb ἐλρυνεύομαι ('dissemble', 'feign ignorance') links the two ideas: irony and pretence.

⁹ The words are mocking. The scholia to the *Iliad* identify the poet's use of sarcasm at a number of points: see, e.g., the scholiasts on 14.457; 20.256; 22.271.

¹⁰ Patroklos in this case is not only addressing the fallen hero; he is taunting the Trojan warriors within earshot.

¹¹ For the useful term 'off record', see Brown and Levinson (1978, 216): '[a] communicative act is done off record if it is done in such a way that it is not possible

to attribute one clear communicative intention to the act'. Brown and Levinson go on to point out (at 217) that many classic off record strategies, such as irony (and sarcasm) are very often on record when used, because the speaker gives other clues to his or her attitude.

¹² Cf. Attardo (2000).

¹³ On this see Haiman (1998, 25).

¹⁴ Gibbs (2000, 24).

¹⁵ Wilson and Sperber (1992, 57). Perhaps not all cultures express sarcasm in the same manner as English speakers. Haiman (1998, 17) suggests that there are cultural as well as personal variations in the penchant for that kind of play-behaviour that we call sarcasm. Although Haiman does not securely identify any cultures in which sarcasm is not recognized, he speculates (at 16) that the Hua of the highlands of Papua New Guinea may not know sarcasm.

¹⁶ Wilson and Sperber (1992, 57). Colston (1997, 25), however, notes that children often misunderstand verbal (that is, rhetorical) irony, which can at times have multiple meanings. I suggest that some education of the young must take place, to give them an ear for irony. See also below on the recognition of sarcasm in everyday conversation.

¹⁷ Gibbs (2000, 17) notes that of the sarcastic remarks made by his student sample 64% of the sarcastic remarks (with a hostile aggressive content) were made by men; 36% by women--a significant difference. And he observes too that 45% of the victims of sarcasm were men; 51% were women.

¹⁸ Haiman (1998, 41-4). Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989, 383) observe that excessive politeness is sarcastic when it is combined with rank. Thus a mother who asks her daughter to tidy her room, using elaborate strategies of indirectness ('Would you mind very much if I asked you . . .'), is combining communicative intention with a discourse option: she is making a request and being sarcastic.

¹⁹ Haiman (1998, 30-9). Haiman notes that some of these options are recognizable in other cultures as well: for example, a sing-song melody is reported in English, French, Italian, Turkish, Berber, Korean, and Israeli Hebrew. Clark and Gerrig (1984, 122) put it nicely when they say of the ironic tone of voice: people "leave their own voices behind for new ones". Gibbs (2000, 18) notes that 76% of the sarcastic remarks in his study of irony featured special intonation patterns.

²⁰ Gibbs (2000, 25).

²¹ Tannen (1984, 130-143, at 131).

²² Gibbs (2000, 7). Gibbs' study is an important inquiry into irony. He recorded 62 conversations between college students and their friends and analysed them for instances of irony--jocularity, hyperbole, understatement, rhetorical questions, and sarcasm. He notes, at 14, that of the 289 ironical utterances that he identified 28% were sarcastic remarks; and, at 22, that sarcasm is the second most frequent form of irony after jocularity (50% of all ironic responses). Both Gibbs' study and Tannen's (see above) examine the use of sarcasm in conversations between friends. The observations they make on the basis of their data will necessarily be skewed, since no account has been taken there of the use of sarcasm between people other than friends.

²³ Rockwell (2000, 668).

²⁴ Gibbs (1986, 10-12).

²⁵ Gibbs (2000, 18); Rockwell (2004).

²⁶ Nowhere else in the literature on sarcasm do I find reference to the sarcastic remark that is made *sotto voce*: the speaker cannot help making the remark, but does not want to risk being heard. This phenomenon is familiar to most of us, whether we ourselves have uttered such remarks or have heard others doing so. There are no such examples in the Homeric epics.

²⁷ Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989, 375).

²⁸ Gibbs (2000, 7): sarcasm allows us to express frustration at situations or objects, or when we see our group's norms violated.

²⁹ Colston (1997, 42). This is the kind of situation in which either non-verbal communication or prosodic cues may play a critical role. Why is such a remark more hostile? Perhaps because the listener, having had to work a little harder to discover the meaning of the utterance, is more engaged--and, therefore, more likely to feel the intended hurt.

³⁰ Cf. Diomedes' teasing words to Nestor at *Il.* 10.164-7: σχέτλιός ἐσσι, γεραιέ, aged sir, you are a hard man, 164; σὺ δ' ἄμ' ἡχάνος ἐσσι, you are too much for us, 167.

³¹ For the full list of sarcastic utterances in the *Odyssey*, see Table 1.

³² Odysseus at this point is addressing both Laodamas and Euryalos. Laodamas' invitation to Odysseus had been superficially inoffensive, although perhaps slightly

patronizing (note his condescending εἴ τινα που δεδάηκας, 'if you have skill in any [contests]', 146). It must be his imputation that Odysseus, the new arrival on Scheria, would not be a match for the Phaiakian youths that so irritated Odysseus and caused him to reply defensively (τί με ταῦτα κελεύετε κερτομέοντες; 'why do you mock me with this challenge?' 153) to Laodamas and his friend. On this scene see also Lloyd (2004, 85-6). Based as it is on discourse analysis, Lloyd's article complements this present paper in significant ways. For further discussion of κερτομέω and related words, see below.

³³ On flyting, the boast-insult contest, see Martin (1989, 47, 68-75).

³⁴ Dimock (1989, 97).

³⁵ On the significance of the scowl in Homer, see Holoka (1983). According to Holoka (at 4, n.8) lowered brows are a "social dominance gesture". Here, therefore, Odysseus is asserting that he is superior in status to and entitled to deference from Euryalos. As we shall see below, there are a number of instances of the scowl as a response to words of sarcasm--or, indeed, accompanying them.

³⁶ On dramatic irony (shared by the poet with his audience), see Nünlist (2000, 81-6). On the content of Antinoös' speech, see Dimock (1989, 225). For detailed comment on the metrical composition of this speech see Russo's comment in Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck (1992, 38): Russo identifies synizesis (375 and 378); assonantal echo at 375; and frequent use of 'η' and liquid sounds in 376.

³⁷ Telemachos appears to be interrupting Eumaios (σίγα, be silent, 393); but Eumaios for his part appears to have said all that he intended to say (having declared his loyalty to Penelope and Telemachos).

³⁸ On Telemachos' new "presence", see Lateiner (1995, 163-4).

³⁹ See de Jong (2001, 426), on the "tight structure" of this scene; and, at 427, on Odysseus' role as a "silent character" who overhears an important series of exchanges.

⁴⁰ For discussion of the full role of these two suitors, see Fenik (1974, 198-205).

⁴¹ Fenik (1974, 201, 203).

⁴² Homer makes it plain that Eurymachos' 'joke' is intended by Athene to cause Odysseus further pain (346-8) and therefore to justify the revenge he eventually takes: on this see Russo in Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck (1992, 69-70).

⁴³ For discussion see Lloyd (2004); Lloyd allows (at 87) that the best English translation of *kertomia* is 'sarcasm'; but that 'sarcasm' does not include a distinctive element of *kertomia*, which is ironic politeness. Most recently, Gottesman (2008), rightly resists the idea of ironic politeness and argues that *kertomia* is oblique talk, an aside, uttered in an aggressive, status-conscious fashion. For useful commentary on the intention behind *kertomia* see especially Clarke (2001, 337): "it belongs in the armoury of a bullying and manipulative user of Homeric language".

⁴⁴ On the ominous nature of the joke see Murnaghan (1987, 85-6).

⁴⁵ de Jong (2001, 455) refers to this technique as the "catchword" technique.

⁴⁶ Lateiner (1995, 227), refers to this as a "status-lowering counterchallenge".

⁴⁷ Odysseus' recreation of such a scene is vivid because it is his immediate ambition: since his arrival in the palace he must have been dwelling on his own return to the palace and the expulsion of the suitors. For commentary on this speech as "veiled self-revelation", see Murnaghan (1987, 87). Odysseus' implication that Eurymachos is a coward is not, in fact, supported by later events: note Eurymachos' display of courage at 22.34-88. I thank Peter Wilson for drawing my attention to the introduction of word-play at this point.

⁴⁸ See also Russo in Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck (1992, 71).

⁴⁹ Ktesippos extends the sarcasm into further insult: the beggar will be able to offer this guest-gift--that is no gift--to the woman who washes his feet or a slave in Odysseus' house--that is, to someone of his own servile class. The motif of the guest-gift (ξείλιον) that is no gift at all has already been in play: see 9. 369-70, and 517-8 (the Polyphemos episode), where the term ξείλιον is used with heavy irony (although not with 'flesh-tearing' sarcasm).

⁵⁰ Russo in Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck (1992, 122) offers useful comments on the speech as a whole, which, in its listing of the offences of the suitors, indicates that the climax of the tale is approaching.

⁵¹ On this "eerie passage" see Russo in Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck (1992, 124-5. Theoklymenos repeats his prophecy in more rational terms at 367-70.

⁵² For discussion of this 'collective delirium', see Guidorizzi (1997, 1).

⁵³ As de Jong (2001, 503) observes, looking at one another is the non-verbal behaviour that usually accompanies τῆς speeches (cf. 8.328, 10.37, 13.167, 18.72, 21.396): it underscores collectivity. Such behaviour sometimes leads to word-play, for

everyone's amusement: if we look back to the $\tau\iota\varsigma$ speech of 18.73-4, we observe there the play of Ἴρος ἄϊρος (Iros . . . no Iros, 18.73). Russo in Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck (1992, 52) reads this usage as sarcastic; I see it as playful humour. I detect no desire amongst the suitors to wound Iros; he is a source of sport for them.

⁵⁴ Certainly Antinoös' caustic use of $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}$ at 171 is designed to insult and demean Leodes, who makes no reply. His return to the scene at 22.310-9 reveals him as a cowardly individual. We should not expect any defiance here at 168-74.

⁵⁵ Russo in Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck (1992, 192) observes that $\pi\eta\delta\eta$ should be read as sarcastic. The tone is sufficiently threatening to discourage Eumaios from offering the bow to the beggar (366-7).

⁵⁶ Russo in Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck (1992, 185) suggests that even Penelope speaks sarcastically at 21.317: he bases this on her use of $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ and $\pi\omicron\upsilon$ (at 317), and $\gamma\epsilon$ (at 317 and 318). I argue that she is not being sarcastic here, as I define it (the remark is clearly not intended to mock or taunt the beggar). Rather Penelope is speaking dismissively ('Oh *him*, I don't think *he* has any expectation of this.');

she is disguising her interest in the beggar.

⁵⁷ On this passage see also Russo in Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck (1992, 199-200).

⁵⁸ This is, of course, pretence. The suitor has no such wish--he still believes that the bow is destined for one of his fellows. The wish is also ironic at the narrative level: Odysseus *will* be successful and enjoy a great improvement in his fortunes. On this see also de Jong (2001, 521).

⁵⁹ His irony is directed to Telemachos, as an affiliative move: the irony, which they both understand, bonds them.

⁶⁰ On the second half of the speech and its "ironic metaphors", see de Jong (2001, 523).

⁶¹ I use Stanford's term for the events at 22.1-7: Stanford (1958, 370).

⁶² There is debate over the meaning of $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha\tau\omicron\nu$ in this context. For discussion see Stanford (1958, 360); M. Fernández-Galiano, in Russo, Fernández-Galiano, and Heubeck (1992, 157). I adopt the meaning of 'decisive' as it neatly fits both contexts.

⁶³ Dawn was the time when the goatherd would bring his flock down to the palace, to provide for the suitors' needs. For a slightly different reading of this taunt, see Dimock (1989, 301-2).

⁶⁴ Note that the boast, which is so essential to the descriptions of warfare in the *Iliad* is not approved in the *Odyssey*: see 22.411-2; and see Kyriacou (2001, 251-2).

⁶⁵ Holoka (1983, 16).

⁶⁶ Sarcasm very often follows one of these introductory verbs. The opposite is not, however, true. These verbs are not unfailingly linked with sarcasm, for they may introduce rebukes and reproofs that have no sarcastic content--especially *νεικέω*. The variation in introductory diction for instances of flyting is similar: see Martin (1989, 68).

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